



# Bureau of Parks and Lands

## Demonstration Forest Project

### Project Summary

The Demonstration Forest Project will be implemented in 2006 and 2007 and will include four or five State Parks across Maine, encompassing 2,000-2,500 acres. Range Pond SP and Little Concord Pond SP in Androscoggin and Oxford Counties will host the first two demonstration sites. Other sites being considered are in Androscoggin, Franklin, Cumberland, Oxford, York, and Washington Counties.

#### Vision:

- Educational displays, interpretive materials, and hosted tours will increase public understanding of forest ecology, resource management, and conservation topics. Partnerships with educational and professional organizations will help reach a wide range of audiences.
- Forestry operations will be tailored to the site, and illustrate scientific forest management and conservation practices to improve, restore, and regenerate forest stands, and provide financial support for the Bureau budget.
- Timber harvesting will complement park recreation development, wildlife habitat objectives, and speed creation of desired future forest conditions.
- Financial considerations will not compromise resource protection measures, management protocols, or silvicultural decisions.



#### Background:

During legislative deliberations on the FY06/07 General Fund budget, the Parks Division of the Bureau of Parks & Lands was given a reduction target of approximately \$1.9M for the biennium. It was determined that this target could not be met by cost reductions alone, and would require State Park closures. The Demonstration Forest proposal was developed as a means to augment the BPL budget without compromising the integrity of the State Park system. The 113<sup>th</sup> Legislature approved the Forest Demonstration Project as part of the FY06/07 budget, with specific revenue generation targets. Existing state statute authorizes timber harvesting in State Parks for use within parks, for wildlife habitat improvement, for fire, insect or disease control, for recreation or aesthetic improvements, and *for forest management demonstration areas*.

#### Planning and Management Process:

An Advisory Committee was established to assist the Bureau with Project development. The six-member Committee, representing a range of interested stakeholders, created educational goals and site selection criteria, and recommended priority sites for operations. Bureau and Department staff provided technical expertise, conducted field assessments, and implemented the policies and criteria developed by the Committee.

The best locations for forest management demonstration areas were selected from the 100,000+ acres of State Parks and Historic Sites based on site-specific resource information and assessments. Ecologically-sensitive areas and other special resources were identified and will be protected. For example, no harvesting will occur within critical habitats identified by the Maine Natural Areas Program, or in old growth forests. Special attention will be given to high-use or visually-sensitive sites. Forest management activities are

designed to consider recreation, aesthetic, and educational—as well as economic values. Harvests will be prescribed and supervised by licensed professional foresters.

### **Education and Demonstration:**

Educational and interpretive offerings will be the principal way that the public is aware of the Project. All management activities are specifically designed to best develop each site's educational prospects. An array of facilities will be considered and developed at each site, including:

- trail head kiosks
- self guided tour stations
- school visits and other staffed events offered in conjunction with education and forestry partners

### **Goals for the Demonstration Forest Project**

- Protect ecologically sensitive sites
- Enhance aesthetic appeal for recreation
- Foster vigorous stands, large trees, and long-lived species
- Provide diverse, productive wildlife habitat
- Protect water quality
- Illustrate Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Employ sustainable forestry practices

### **The Lead Site:**

Range Pond State Park was chosen as the Project's lead site for its outstanding potential to demonstrate forest ecology and management, wildlife habitat enhancement, and water quality protection. The Park's high use, group meeting space, and close proximity to Lewiston-Auburn and other population centers provide excellent educational opportunities.

#### *Range Pond SP Project Highlights*

- 480± acre demonstration (65% of park area)
- Two new trailhead information kiosks
- New multi-season interpretive trails

#### *Range Pond Demonstration Themes*

- Maintain and enhance forest biodiversity
  - Accelerated restoration of old-forest conditions
  - Riparian and vernal pool/amphibian habitat protection
- Maintain and improve wildlife habitats
  - Thinning to improve oak vigor and acorn production
  - Openings in Aspen-Birch stands for grouse and woodcock habitat
- Protect water quality
  - Buffer water bodies
  - Best Management Practices (BMPs) utilized throughout
- Enhance aesthetic appeal and recreation
  - Accelerate growth of large trees and open stands
  - Mixed age and species management
  - New hiking trails with self-guided tours and trailhead educational kiosks

### **For More Information:**

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